

The Moorestown Friends School Honors Program



MFS Honors Program: Overview

The MFS Honors Program is designed to challenge and inspire students wishing to undertake the most rigorous and wide-ranging college-preparatory curriculum the school has to offer. Two years in duration (grades 11 and 12), its goal is to provide students with both breadth and depth of learning, i.e., accelerated, well-rounded mastery of the academic disciplines coupled with significant specialization in one area. Emphasizing individual creativity, independence and action, the program requires students to identify and develop a passion, seek out and acquire relevant knowledge and skills, and apply these in the world. Students have significant latitude in designing their program, and work closely with faculty during the two-year process.

Criteria for admission to the program include: academic aptitude as indicated by grades and standardized test scores through the sophomore year; intellectual curiosity, motivation, self-discipline, organization and an ability to work independently; and strong teacher recommendations. Application to the Honors Program is made in the spring of sophomore year. Admission to the program, tracking students' progress and certifying successful completion are the responsibility of the Honors Program Committee.

Program requirements

A. Candidates must satisfy the following four *academic criteria* in their junior or senior year:

1. Completion of a minimum of four AP courses and exams, including at least one quantitative course (e.g., Chemistry, Calculus) and one humanities/art course (e.g., English, Studio Art).
2. Completion of level four French or Spanish.
3. Completion of a Discipline Concentration, i.e., a program of related major and minor courses, extracurricular activities, service, trips, etc., designed by the student and approved by the academic department. (See Appendix for samples.)
4. Completion of a Senior Demonstration, i.e., a capstone project that is presented and defended publicly. Typically requiring about 40 hours of independent work (i.e., not used to fulfill other MFS requirements), such projects might include: a research paper; lab experiment; portfolio; internship; technology project; directing, staging, lighting or costuming a play; choreographing and/or performing a dance; composing and/or performing music; creating and mounting an art exhibition; or undertaking a service initiative.

B. Candidates must also satisfy two of the following *action criteria* in their junior or senior year:

1. Participation in a varsity-level sport during both junior and senior years.
2. Participation in a significant leadership position (e.g., clerk of Agenda Committee, Honor Committee or Meeting for Business, editor of yearbook or school newspaper, organizer of Emancipation Rocklamation).
3. Participation in a service trip (e.g., Mexico, Everglades, New Orleans, Nicaragua or Tanzania) or a significant community outreach project (e.g., political campaign, environmental advocacy, fundraiser).
4. Participation in a world language exchange/trip.
5. Participation in at least three significant off-campus opportunities (e.g., competitions, conferences, student leadership institutes, summer programs).
6. Participation in two performing arts groups during junior and senior years, or playing a significant role in two dramatic performances during junior and senior years.
7. Participation in a significant action-oriented experience of the student's own design.

MFS Honors Program: Detailed Description

The MFS Honors Program is designed to challenge and inspire students wishing to undertake the most rigorous and wide-ranging college-preparatory curriculum the school has to offer. Two years in duration (grades 11 and 12), its goal is to provide students with both breadth and depth of learning, i.e., accelerated, well-rounded mastery of the academic disciplines coupled with significant specialization in one area. Emphasizing individual creativity, independence and action, the program requires students to identify and develop a passion, seek out and acquire relevant knowledge and skills, and apply these in the world. Students have significant latitude in designing their program, and work closely with faculty during the two-year process.

Advance Preparation

Although the Honors Program takes place in junior and senior years, students should begin considering whether it might be a desirable and appropriate option during ninth and tenth grade. All students and families should be familiar with the opportunities and requirements of the Honors Program and may want to make course choices with the program in mind. In all academic disciplines the ninth and tenth grade curricula at MFS provide adequate preparation for the Honors Program. It is not necessary that students take advanced or honors level courses as freshmen and sophomores, but it is highly desirable. Doing so provides the best preparation for the pace and rigor of the Honors Program and would allow students maximum flexibility in meeting the program's AP requirement. As fifth-year courses, for example, AP Spanish and French require a student to have taken the level two course in ninth grade. AP Calculus AB requires a student to have followed the advanced track in math since ninth grade, or to accelerate at some point by means of summer work. AP Calculus BC requires further acceleration. Underclassmen interested in the Honors Program should consult with the Division Director regarding appropriate course choices.

Application and Admission

The Honors Program is meant to be challenging and rewarding to a range of students with diverse

interests. Its requirements are flexible enough to appeal, for example, both to the budding scientist and the studio artist. The program is intended not just for a select handful of students with sterling grades, but for students with a strong desire and commitment to challenge themselves during the last two years of high school.

In considering applicants the Honors Program Committee looks for evidence of strong academic achievement and aptitude as indicated by grades and standardized test scores through the sophomore year. Other criteria, including intellectual curiosity, motivation, self-discipline, organization and an ability to work independently, are equally important.

Applicants must submit the Honors Program application to the Program Committee before March 15 of the sophomore year. A complete application includes:

1. Program application form (including personal statement and two letters of recommendation)
2. Transcript for grades nine and ten (provided by the Division Director)
3. ERB scores (provided by the Division Director)

The program application solicits basic factual information and asks students to indicate how they plan to satisfy the program requirements. The personal statement is an important part of the application that allows the Program Committee to evaluate intangible factors such as a student's motivation, commitment and personal vision. These factors are as important as one's academic record. One to two typed pages in length, the essay should explain the student's rationale for seeking admission to the program. It should describe what s/he hopes to accomplish and indicate an area of specialization for the discipline concentration. Since a significant independent project (Senior Demonstration) is an integral part of the program, the personal statement should describe the topics or activities the student is considering for such a project, with the understanding that they will likely change and evolve as the student progresses through the program.

Program Requirements

A. Candidates must satisfy the following four academic criteria in their junior or senior year.

1. Completion of a minimum of four Advanced Placement (AP) courses and exams.

AP courses are internationally recognized standards of academic rigor, and they provide students the equivalent of a first-year college curriculum. The sponsoring body, the College Board, provides external benchmarking in the form of three-hour exams held in May. Students may earn advanced standing or credit at hundreds of colleges and universities depending on exam results. The Honors Program seeks to promote both breadth and depth of learning by requiring participants to distribute their AP choices across disciplines, taking at least one quantitative course (e.g., Chemistry, Calculus, Physics) and one humanities/art course (e.g., English, History, Spanish, Studio Art). MFS offers the following AP courses in the junior or senior year:

Math:	Calculus AB, Calculus BC, Statistics
Technology:	Computer Programming A
Science:	Biology, Chemistry, Environmental Science, Physics C
World Language:	Spanish Language, French Language
English:	English Literature
History:	United States History
Arts:	Music Theory, Studio Art (Drawing)

2. Completion of level four in a second language.

Seeking to foster a global perspective and cross-cultural dialogue, the Honors Program mandates the study of French or Spanish beyond what is required for graduation (level three). Level four courses involve a substantial increase in level of sophistication, as the *acquisition* of grammar and vocabulary of earlier courses shifts to *application*. Instruction takes place entirely in the target language, and students pursue a variety of texts and projects that hone their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Students are encouraged to cement their fluency through participation in an exchange or service trip abroad (see B.3-4 below).

3. Completion of a discipline concentration, i.e., a program of related major and minor courses, activities, service and trips.

This component of the program requires students to demonstrate mastery and specialization in one specific area. Like a university major, concentrations allow students to explore an area of personal interest in detail, and develop a degree of expertise well beyond what is usual in a high school curriculum. Working closely with faculty in the discipline, students design a course of study combining major and minor courses and activities. Typically a minimum of two majors, six minors and two co-curricular activities are required, as is approval by members of the academic department. Minor courses taken in freshman and sophomore year may be counted toward this requirement. Some sample concentrations are listed in the Appendix. As these are suggested templates only, not prescriptive requirements, the exact course of study will vary from student to student.

4. Completion of a senior demonstration, i.e., a capstone project that is presented and defended publicly at the end of the senior year.

An opportunity to display deep engagement with a topic of choice, such projects might include: writing a research paper; conducting a lab experiment; creating a portfolio; participating in an internship; designing a technology project; directing, staging, lighting or costuming a play; choreographing and/or performing a dance; composing and/or performing music; mounting an art exhibition; or undertaking a service initiative. Although the project may emerge from the student's discipline concentration, all work must be independent (i.e., not used to fulfill other Honors Program or MFS requirements). Senior demonstrations are expected to require about 40 hours to complete. Program participants may work on this requirement at any time during the year, including during May in lieu of senior project.

Students choose a faculty advisor to help design and supervise their project. A demonstration proposal must be completed and submitted to the Program Committee by the end of September of senior year. The proposal asks students to describe the activity to be undertaken, identify its goals, outcomes and necessary resources, and specify an intended schedule for completion.

An oral defense of 30-60 minutes takes place no later than the beginning of senior week (early June) before a panel that includes one member of the Program Committee, the demonstration advisor and at least one other MFS teacher, administrator or outside authority chosen by the student. Students earn a mark of honors, pass or no credit for the project based on the quality of their work, the degree to which goals and outcomes are met, and the quality of the oral defense.

B. Candidates must satisfy two of the following action criteria in their junior or senior year:

1. *Participation in a varsity-level sport during both junior and senior years.*

Following the advice of the ancient Roman statesman Seneca, MFS encourages students to maintain a “sound mind in a sound body.” We believe that attaining varsity-level skills and fitness in a given sport will promote the habits of a healthy and fun lifestyle, and provide valuable lessons in teamwork and commitment. Additionally, ample research supports a positive correlation between increased levels of physical activity and academic achievement.

2. *Participation in a significant leadership position at MFS or outside of school.*

The program seeks to foster leadership skills such as the ability to articulate a vision, set and achieve goals, motivate and collaborate with others, and persevere through adversity. What constitutes a “significant” leadership role is determined by the Honors Program Committee. Possibilities include clerk of Agenda Committee, Honor Committee or Meeting for Business, editor of the yearbook or school newspaper, or organizer of Emancipation Rocklamation.

3. *Participation in a service trip (e.g., Mexico, Everglades, New Orleans, Nicaragua or Tanzania) or a significant community outreach project (e.g., political campaign, environmental advocacy, fundraiser).*

The Religious Society of Friends has always been committed to serving others. This component of the Honors Program encourages students to engage with the broader world and to work to make a positive difference.

4. *Participation in a world language exchange/trip.*

Students are encouraged to apply and hone their second-language skills in an immersion experience in a foreign country. Recent opportunities have included home stays, attending school and travel in Spain and France. Together with requirement A.2 (completing level four of a second language), this option seeks to promote global awareness and cross-cultural understanding.

5. *Participation in at least three significant off-campus opportunities (e.g., competitions, conferences, student leadership institutes, 10th/11th grade summer programs).*

This aspect of the program encourages students to take their learning beyond the MFS campus, seeking opportunities to broaden their interests or sharpen their expertise. Specific experiences might include attending the Quaker Youth Leadership Conference, the NAIS People of Color Conference, Anytown, the Youth Service Initiative, a New Jersey Governor’s School, or the New Jersey Envirothon competition.

6. *Participation in two performing arts groups during junior and senior years, or playing a significant role in two dramatic performances during junior and senior years.*

This option acknowledges the importance of performance art – instrumental, choral and theatrical – to the development of personal creativity and the building of community. The Honors Program seeks to promote students’ engagement with their inner, creative selves and strengthen their ability to share that aspect publicly.

7. *Participation in a significant action-oriented experience of the student’s own design.*

Program Coordination

Oversight of the Honors Program is the responsibility of the Program Committee, clerked by the Upper School Director. In addition to the Director, the committee includes the Academic Dean, Dean of Students, Upper School Counselor, Director of College Guidance and the Diversity Coordinator. This group, and especially the Division Director, plays the lead role in: informing students and families about the program and maintaining effective communication throughout its duration; organizing

the application process; tracking students' progress in the program; vetting proposals for, scheduling and organizing Senior Demonstrations; certifying successful completion of the program; and mediating concerns that may arise during the program.

Oversight and Assessment

The Division Director, Program Committee and Demonstration Advisor provide ample oversight to ensure a student remains on track for successful completion of the program. Students are required to take the AP exam at the end of each AP course. Proposals for concentrations are vetted for rigor and appropriateness by individual academic departments, whose endorsement and sponsorship are required. Senior demonstrations are evaluated by a panel including one member of the Program Committee, the demonstration advisor, and at least one MFS teacher, administrator or outside authority chosen by the student.

Completion and Recognition

Students who successfully complete all program requirements are awarded a certificate and recognition at the end of senior year. If on track to complete the program they are invited to attend the Honor Societies Banquet in May, and are recognized at the final Awards Assembly in June. A list of the annual graduates of the Honors Program is inscribed and displayed in the Upper School hallway. Students' participation and progress in the program are reported to colleges during the admissions cycle, and completion of the program is indicated on the MFS transcript.

Frequently Asked Questions

How will this program enhance academic rigor at MFS?

The Honors Program makes explicit what is meant by "academic rigor" at MFS: breadth, depth and application of learning. The AP and language requirements, for example, reflect the school's commitment to producing well-rounded students. The concentration and demonstration criteria reflect the value placed on deep mastery and expertise. And the action requirement helps students to think deliberately about their role outside the classroom and the ways that they can connect to and participate in the broader world.

The Honors Program will benefit participants by challenging them with the school's most rigorous

college-preparatory curriculum. It acknowledges and promotes a wide range of talents and interests, encourages students to be thoughtful and proactive in planning their education, and helps students to identify and develop a passion. We anticipate that participation in the program will enhance students' prospects for admission to colleges and universities.

AP courses are open to all qualified students, regardless of enrollment in the Honors Program, and thus all students will benefit from the increased number and scope of these college-level offerings. Teachers of AP courses attend high-quality weeklong workshops sponsored by the College Board, and undergo the AP Course Audit procedures. The result will be increased expertise and improved pedagogy for all students.

Students not enrolled in the full Honors Program may elect to pursue a concentration. The extensive array of minor electives in the Upper School is one of the unique strengths of the MFS curriculum, and the concentration offers students a chance to capitalize on it. Students must think carefully about their interests and collaborate with departmental faculty on a program of courses and activities. The result will be increased expertise and the sense of commitment and satisfaction that derive from personal choice.

What effect will this program have on college admissions?

Participants in the Program will pursue the most challenging, comprehensive curriculum the school has to offer. Individual criteria – e.g., taking four AP courses, reaching level four of a second language – are in keeping with expectations at the most selective institutions of higher education. Further, the concentration, demonstration and action criteria foster a curious, passionate, disciplined, proactive and independent-minded student – qualities that typically carry weight in college admissions decisions.

Students not in the Honors Program can enhance their college prospects by taking advantage of honors and AP course offerings. Even without them, the MFS college guidance program has always done – and will continue to do – an outstanding job helping all students gain admission to great schools that match their goals, abilities and temperament. Annual family surveys reveal a high level of satisfaction with our process, our counselors and admissions results. MFS is committed to maintaining the highest standards in this important process.

Will the Honors Program increase students' workload and/or stress level?

The Honors Program is rigorous and participants should expect to work hard. While they generally take the same number of classes as other students, their AP courses will be challenging and will demand above-average time commitment, especially during exam time in early May. Other program criteria – e.g., the discipline concentration, sports participation – do not involve an increased workload as much as a heightened deliberateness in designing a well-rounded curriculum. Honors Program participants must be diligent and forward-thinking in meeting these requirements and attentive to periodic deadlines, all of which require time and energy.

Honors Program participants will need self-discipline and an ability to work independently in order to complete the senior demonstration successfully. Seniors may work on their demonstration at any time during the year, including in May in lieu of a senior project. While the time commitment is roughly equivalent to their peers' senior projects, Honors Program students face the additional hurdle of the oral defense.

The responsibilities of the Honors Program will likely increase students' stress levels at certain times, e.g., when preparing for AP exams or the senior demonstration. The Honors Program committee includes the Upper School Counselor who monitors students' emotional well-being and coordinates support services for students experiencing anxiety or any difficulties during the program.

Questions about the Honors Program should be addressed to the Division Director or any member of the Honors Program Committee:

Matt Glendinning:	Division Director
Barbara Caldwell:	Academic Dean and Associate Head of School
Katy Rinehart:	Director of College Guidance and Chair of English Department
Mike Brunswick:	Dean of Students and Chair of Health/Physical Education Department
Katie LuBrant:	Upper School Counselor
Karen Washington:	Diversity Coordinator

Appendix: Sample Discipline Concentrations

English Concentration (Publications)

Majors: American Literature Honors, AP English

Minors: two-year commitment to two school publications (*Wordsworth*, yearbook or *Images*)

Activities: participation in a student publications conference; summer internship at a local newspaper or magazine

English Concentration (Theater)

Majors: AP English, Theater Arts Honors

Minors: Acting, Directing, Interpreting Shakespeare, Diversity in Film, Paper Bag Theater, Greek Theater

Activities: Drama Club; Shakespeare Club; director of one-act play at Drama Club night; participation in New Jersey Governor's School of the Arts (Theater)

English Concentration (Creative Writing)

Majors: AP English, Creative Writing Major

Minors: two-year commitment to *Wordsworth* or *Images*, Creative Writing (Memoir), Children's Literature

Activities: participation in the Dodge Poetry Festival; submission of creative writing to out-of-school publication or competition; participation in a summer program

History Concentration

Majors: AP United States History, Philosophy Honors I & II

Minors: The Bible as History, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Medieval History, Latin American History through Film, the History of Science

Activities: submission of research paper to Cum Laude Society; participation in Model UN and Mock Primary Election activities

Math Concentration

Majors: AP Calculus AB, AP Statistics

Minors: Robotics, Game Theory, Discrete Mathematics, Computer Game Programming, Advanced Geometer's Sketchpad, Personal Finance

Activities: Engineering Club; Computer Club; peer tutor in Math; Lower School teacher's aid in Math; American High School Math Exam

Performing Arts Concentration

Majors: Theater Arts Honors, AP Music Theory

Minors: Acting, Directing, Chorale and Show Choir or Wind Ensemble and Small Group Ensemble, History and Film, Interpreting and Performing Shakespeare

Activities: Drama Club; Shakespeare Club; Film Club; stage crew; director of one-act play at Drama Club night, participation in plays; bi-annual Choir tour

Science Concentration 1 (Physical sciences)

Majors: Physics I Honors and AP Physics C; or Chemistry I Honors and AP Chemistry

Minors: Robotics, Engineering Design, Rocketry, Slot Cars, Food Science, Forensic Science, Science of Cosmetics

Activities: Conqueror of the Hill Competition; NJ Science Olympiads; Delaware Valley Science Competition; National Chemistry or Physics Olympics Competition

Science Concentration 2 (Life sciences)

Majors: Biology I Honors and AP Biology or AP Environmental Science

Minors: Epidemiology, History of Medicine, Evolution, NJ Wildlife, Forestry, Aquatics, Scientific Illustration

Activities: New Jersey Envirothon; Young Epidemiology Scholars Competition; NJ Science Olympiads; Deborah Heart Challenge and Art Competition; NJ Department of Agriculture Conservation Poster Contest

Service and Social Justice Concentration

Majors: Globalization, Conflict and Religion, Modern Africa Honors, Literature of the Holocaust, Race, Gender and Identity in Literature

Minors: Effective Leadership, Model United Nations, Economics and Ecology, Humanitarian Law, Samaritan Hospice, Teaching/Orchard Friends

Activities: Member of Agenda and Service Committees, Gay-Straight Alliance and MLK, Jr. clubs; participation in New Orleans service trip

Technology Concentration

Majors: AP Computer Science, Media Arts Major

Minors: Advanced Topics in Computer Science, Advanced Video Editing, JAVA, Web Design, Multimedia Publishing, Introduction to *Illustrator*

Activities: Computer Club; Film Club; original film screened at MFS Film Festival

Visual Arts Concentration

Majors: Art Studio 1, AP Studio Art (Drawing)

Minors: Oil Painting, Woodworking, Modern Painting, Photography, Printmaking, Ceramics or Sculpture, one Fiber Arts course

Activities: design/production of scenery or costumes for plays; design of hallway for Spirit Week; work published in *Images* or exhibited locally; design and installation of in-house display case or bulletin board

Moorestown Friends School Honors Program Application Form

Students wishing to apply to the Moorestown Friends School Honors Program must be eager to pursue the most challenging and wide-ranging curriculum the school has to offer. Because the program emphasizes individual creativity, independence, and action, candidates must demonstrate superior academic aptitude (as indicated by grades and standardized test scores) and a high degree of intellectual curiosity, motivation, self-discipline and organization, as verified by strong teacher recommendations.

The application form and all supporting documents (personal statement and two teacher recommendations) must be submitted to Mr. Glendinning, Upper School Director, no later than March 15. Students will be notified of admission to the Honors Program before spring break.

Student's name: _____

Proposed area of concentration: _____

Academic Honors and Activities

Please list below any *academic* honors, awards, or significant learning experiences that provide evidence of your motivation and achievement. These might include, but are not limited to, Honor Roll, SEE awards, participation in contests such as the National French or Spanish Exam, Science Olympiads, or Math League, attendance at Model UN conferences, publication in the school literary magazine or newspaper, summer enrichment courses, or foreign language exchange trips. (Note: Please include awards and activities from 9th and 10th grades *only*, and indicate when they occurred.)

What has been your most meaningful academic experience at MFS, and why?

Extracurricular Activities

Please list your extracurricular activities, both in and out of school, indicating when you participated in each one and noting any awards or leadership positions (e.g., team captain, club or class officer). Activities might include sports, student government, school clubs, visual or performing arts, service activities, scouting, or religious groups.

Of the activities listed above, which one or two are the most important to you, and why?

Personal Statement

In a 1-2 page typed statement, please explain your interest in the MFS Honors Program and describe what you hope to accomplish. We are particularly interested in your proposed area of concentration—i.e., what courses and activities you hope to undertake related to your area of specialization—as well as the other courses and activities you plan to pursue. Since a significant independent project (Senior Demonstration) is an integral part of the program, we are also interested in knowing the topics or activities you are considering for such a project, realizing that these will likely change and evolve as you go through the program.

Teacher Recommendations

Please ask two teachers who know you well to write a letter of reference for you. At least one should be from a teacher you have had in a major academic subject. As a matter of courtesy, be sure to give teachers at least two weeks notice before the March 15 deadline. Teachers should submit their letters directly to the Upper School Director.

Moorestown Friends School Honors Program

Senior Demonstration Proposal

The Senior Demonstration offers students an opportunity to display deep engagement with a topic of their choice. Although the project may emerge from the student's Discipline Concentration, all work must be independent (i.e., not used to fulfill other Honors Program or MFS requirements). Senior Demonstrations are expected to require about 40 hours to complete. *This form is due before the end of September of senior year.*

Student's name: _____

Demonstration title: _____

Demonstration Advisor: _____

Panel of Evaluators: _____

Please describe your proposed idea in detail. Be sure to indicate what you will do, where, and when (including a work schedule); identify your intended goals and the project's expected outcome or product; and specify any resources you will need. What role will your advisor play; how will s/he support you during the project?